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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0271  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA IMMEDIATE 0038  
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002133

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL EAID KNNP ASEAN IR BM RP

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES BURMA, U.S.-ASEAN SUMMIT,  
IRAN, AND MCC WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO

REF: A. STATE 103219 (IRAN TALKS OUTCOME)  
1B. STATE 100518 (BURMA POLICY REVIEW)

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, reason: 1.4 (b and d).

SUMMARY

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11. (C) In a one-on-one breakfast meeting on October 7, the Ambassador strongly urged Foreign Secretary Romulo to consider favorably our proposal for a November U.S.-ASEAN Summit in Singapore; Romulo preferred that the Summit take place in Bangkok or in the U.S. Romulo welcomed the outcome of the USG's recently-concluded Burma policy review and told the Ambassador the GRP would continue to work with the U.S. to promote our shared objectives. Romulo said he was following closely developments relating to Iran's nuclear program, and he would consult on Iran and other non-proliferation issues in upcoming visits to Paris and Vienna. He was committed to the GRP chairing a productive Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 2010 and wanted to stay in close touch with the USG in the run-up to that event. Romulo also said a senior team of GRP officials might travel to Washington to explain Philippine progress toward meeting Millennium Challenge Corporation indicators. Septel will report the Ambassador's discussion with Romulo on flood relief efforts. End Summary.

BURMA POLICY REVIEW

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12. (C) In a one-on-one breakfast meeting on October 7, the Ambassador briefed Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo on the USG's recently-concluded Burma policy review (ref B). Romulo welcomed the outcome of the review, stating that the U.S., numerous ASEAN countries, and other friends of Burma had exerted great efforts to move Burma back to democracy, promote respect for human rights, and to secure the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. None of these efforts had worked, however, and Romulo believed it appropriate for the USG to try a new approach. He assured the Ambassador that the Philippines would remain solidly with the USG on Burma and was ready to help in any way possible.

ASEAN SUMMIT

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13. (C) The Ambassador raised USG interest in arranging a U.S.-ASEAN Summit in Singapore in November. Romulo said he preferred that the Summit not appear to be a sideshow on the margins of the APEC Summit and suggested it could take place instead in Thailand, directly after APEC. The Ambassador said she did not believe President Obama's itinerary could

include a stop in Thailand, and Singapore appeared to be the only realistic option. Romulo then suggested a Summit in early 2010 in the United States, saying the U.S. hosting would demonstrate the importance of ASEAN. The Ambassador countered that it was precisely because of ASEAN's importance that the USG hoped to schedule the summit for the near future, and it would be better to proceed with an event in Singapore rather than delaying the Summit.

IRAN/NPT REVCON

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14. (C) The Ambassador reviewed recent multilateral talks with Iran, drawing on ref A to explain the USG's current perspective and highlight the need for meaningful action from Iran. Romulo said he had followed the talks with interest and hoped the USG would succeed in its efforts. Iran needed to stop pursuing actions that could prove seriously destabilizing in the Middle East. Romulo would depart on the night of October 7 to Paris, where he would discuss both Iranian affairs and broader issues relating to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with French officials. He then would proceed to Vienna and visit the IAEA, among others. Recognizing the Philippines' modest role in such matters, Romulo nevertheless said he hoped to do everything possible to chair a productive NPT Review Conference and help reduce the threat of nuclear weapons. He assured us he wanted to work closely and cooperatively with the USG on nonproliferation.

MCC

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15. (C) The Philippines remains eager to sign a Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, Romulo said. The Ambassador welcomed the progress the Philippines had made on the technical side. Now, the challenge for the GRP was to show that it was meeting the MCC's defined indicators. Romulo said that the Philippines could demonstrate meaningful progress, and the GRP might send a senior team to Washington in the near future to provide updates on Philippine efforts.

COMMENT

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16. (C) The Philippines has been exceptionally forward-leaning on Burma, displaying a willingness to criticize the junta that is rare among ASEAN countries, and we are confident the GRP will remain a valued partner as we implement our new Burma policy. We hope that the Philippines will prove equally helpful on Iranian issues and believe Romulo is sincerely sympathetic to our concerns. Nevertheless, we worry that the GRP's ongoing pursuit of closer ties with Middle Eastern governments (in part to secure support for observer status at the Organization of the Islamic Conference) might constrain the GRP somewhat on nonproliferation issues and Iran. On the ASEAN Summit, the Philippines clearly had hoped to have a Summit that was not attached to APEC. But they are beginning to understand that there really is no other option, and will ultimately, we believe, agree with holding the ASEAN Summit in Singapore.

KENNEY